Commander's Emergency Response Program: An Effects Based Approach

by

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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Commander's Emergency Response Program: An Effects Based Approach

> You must know something about strategy and tactics and …logistics, but also economic and politics and diplomacy and history. You must know everything you can know about military power, and you must also understand the limits of military power. You must understand that few of the important problems of our time have…been finally solved by military power alone.

—President John F. Kennedy[1]

Perspective

The Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) is one of the many tools available to military commanders in Afghanistan to implement their counterinsurgency (COIN) efforts. CERP has evolved greatly since my last deployment as the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force – Afghanistan (CJSOTF-A) J8 in 2007. I served two rotations with CJSOTF-A as the J8 and worked with three different Joint Task Forces (JTF) in Regional Command East. Each Relief in Place / Transfer of Authority (RIP/TOA) significantly changed the dynamics of the program. Poor handover of projects or change in military missions left scores of incomplete projects languishing, impacting program oversight at all levels. This inability to complete CERP projects prompted Congressional leaders to question CERP's importance and threaten cuts in funding. To address this concern, it became more important to get a project on contract and obligated in the finance community, than to gain the maximum effect from the project. Larger projects became the norm because they obligated more funds. Commanders throughout the organization had the best intentions, but as CERP's execution lagged, the pressure mounted to spend. One critic of how the program is managed is the Department of Defense Inspector General. Over many years, his analysis of the program has been very critical of its management. Reviewing these

findings, along with the history of the program and lessons learned, is crucial to designing a path forward to achieve the desired effects of CERP.

Purpose of CERP

CERP in its current state is a commander's program. The program is designed to give commanders a tool to address causes of instability in their areas of operations. This tool is in the form of money that can be used on projects within the local area. These projects, when executed properly, are intended to foster good will between the populace and coalition forces. As an added benefit, projects can also shed a positive light on the government of the supported nation. Legitimizing the host nation government, ensuring greater COIN effect, and delegitimizing the insurgency are ultimately the effects of CERP projects can have.

Counterinsurgency Operations

Money has the ability to shape the battlefield. With the advent of CERP, commanders have greater ways and means to accomplish their ends. It is important in COIN for the CERP program to be used to meet not just the military goals, but also the civilian goals. What is important is understanding what our COIN doctrine expects in terms of the civilian / military integration. The U.S. Army Counter-insurgency Manual states: "Essential though it is, the military action is secondary to the political one, its primary purpose being to afford the political power enough freedom to work safely with the population."[2]

The Army Counterinsurgency Manual dedicates an entire chapter to this civilian / military integration. Unity of Effort, chapter two, discusses the principles that CERP managers and commanders need to consider to effectively implement COIN Strategy. The four key principles are: understanding the roles and capabilities of United States

and the Host Nation; including our partners with special attention given to the host nation in planning at all levels; providing support to civilian efforts, in particular nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) whose programs may complement our goals in the region; and focusing on political, social, and economic programs versus military operations.[3] The goal is to work together in our civilian / military roles to stabilize the situation, leveraging each other's strengths and expertise. When security is inadequate or civilian capacity is not available, military forces should be prepared to bridge the gap until civilian capacity can come online. CERP provides a tool to this end. Military organizations need to have the expertise to fill these civilian shortfalls and understand the larger goals in their region to make CERP effective.

In COIN, it is always preferred for civilians to perform civilian tasks with local authorities receiving special preference.[4] However, security is a prerequisite to bringing in civilian capacity, whether that is from the State Department or the Host Nation. COIN Strategy requires that leaders understand how to orchestrate their efforts so that both the military and civilian goals can be achieved. Coalition warfare also adds a new dynamic in that our allies bring different capabilities to the fight. It is important to understand what all our partners bring to the table in terms of COIN to maximize the effect of our operations. Commanders at all levels need to create mechanisms for this coordination to take place. Commanders should invite both formal and informal local leaders, when planning COIN operations, to get buy-in from the populace and to help build legitimacy for the Host Nation. The best way to achieve buy-in from the local

population and the local authorities is through their inclusion in our decision making processes.

<u>Way Ahead</u>

Soldiers today have to understand the context of what they are doing and its impact on the COIN operations. Soldiers at all ranks have an impact on COIN operations by their actions and inactions. The term "strategic corporal" is often used to express these phenomena. According to General Dempsey, "Mission Command establishes a mind-set among leaders that the best understanding comes from the bottom up, not the top down." [5] Leaders ensure that their subordinates understand the political and military aspects of the operation and what the long term objectives are to accomplish them. CERP managers coordinate this effort to attain the commander's desired effects of the COIN operations and the country team's long term plan for stabilizing the host nation.

<div align="center">Historical Perspective</div>

Prior to the invasion of Iraq in the spring of 2003, there was no CERP appropriation available for commanders' use in Afghanistan. The creation of Humanitarian and Civic Assistance (HCA) funding meant that Operational Maintenance funding to do humanitarian assistance was no longer available for the Department of Defense (DOD). In 1984 the Comptroller General ruled that the Army had violated fiscal law when it used its Operation and Maintenance Funding to do humanitarian assistance. This was due to Congress having enacted the Foreign Assistance Act, creating HCA funds for that purpose.[6] These funds, normally coordinated through the combatant command and the State Department, had long lead times for approval. This

was problematic because dealing with local populations during COIN operations is very fluid with short lead times to attain COIN effects. The restriction on using Operations and Maintenance funds would change in the spring of 2003 in Iraq.

Iraq

After the invasion of Iraq and the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in the spring of 2003, U.S. forces found themselves in a position of nation building. On a scale not seen since the fall of the Nazis in World War II. The original plan after the war with Iraq was to put in place an occupation government that would quickly transition governmental tasks back to Iraqi governmental personnel. L. Paul Bremer arrived in Baghdad on 12 May 2003, to lead the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). Shortly after arriving, he decided to disband the Iraqi Army and security forces and to purge 30,000 senior Ba'ath Party members from public employment. This decision led to the loss of experienced government employees and the looting of government facilities, quickly eroding the CPA's ability to govern the country.[7]

This lack of governance and security in Iraq led to the reliance on allied military units to fill the void. However, fiscal law at the time did not allow for commanders to respond rapidly to issues within their Areas of Operations (AOs). They did not have the funding to support civil operations and HCA funds were too narrowly focused and in limited quantities. The original war plan did not foresee these problems; therefore, funds were not appropriated for what was now required. The Bush administration believed that Iraq funding would be available through assets seized from the Iraq government during the war. An event in April 2003 prompted the program we now call CERP. The *Los Angeles Times* reported the story: "Two Army sergeants went searching for saws Friday to clear away branches that were blocking their Humvees.

But they stumbled across a sealed up cottage that aroused their curiosity – and ultimately led to the discovery of an estimated $650 million in cash."[8]

That spring, Major General David Petraeus also requested more funding from the CPA to influence the local population through HCA projects. The CPA created the CERP from these seized Iraqi funds.[9] These funds were not provided by the Treasury of the United States; therefore, they did not fall under the normal rules for appropriated funds. Nevertheless, the CPA set up management controls to track expenditures and projects. Commanders who wanted to use the program had to establish paying agents and field ordering agents out of their force structure to implement the program in their AO. Field ordering agents established contracts with vendors and paying agents paid the vendor when services are received. This new source of funding allowed the CPA to focus on bigger issues and the military to focus on short term projects that could stabilize an area. This program became a tool that by April of 2004 had funded over 21,000 projects throughout Iraq.[10]

The captured funding could not last forever so a request for more funding was attached to the Global War on Terrorism supplemental appropriation request by Central Command, seeking CERP funding authority. Congress provided the authority for CERP in the amount of $180 million. These funds were divided up into $140 million for Iraq and $40 million for Afghanistan. Congress also wrote in the language that these funds only be used in a deployed environment, more specifically, they were only to be used in Iraq and Afghanistan. Congress also lifted the language that required the use of the Federal Acquisition Regulations to place projects on contract.[11] This allowed CERP agents to write contracts without a federal warrant, which gives contracting officers the

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authority to enter contracts on behalf of the United States. These changes to appropriation law mirrored the original rules of the captured funds and allowed for a seamless transition to appropriated CERP in theater.

The new appropriation brought Congressional oversight that did not previously exist.   This increased reporting requirements and theater oversight by Resource Managers. The funds also became tied to the supplemental process, with funds running short or not being available due to Congressional inaction.   These funds were used with great success during the COIN campaign in Iraq. The Son's of Iraq program was a CERP funded project to bring in former insurgents and utilize them to provide security in their towns and villages. While the project was initiated through the Iraqi Sunni population with the assistance of American Leaders in Iraq, its funding mechanism was through the CERP program. General David Petraeus praised the program in his Congressional testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee on April 8, 2008 for having reduced violence in Iraq significantly. This program was not initially embraced by the Iraqi government, but on September 4, 2008 Prime Minister Maliki recognized the Son's of Iraq and started to transition the program to the Iraqi government, incorporating the members into government agencies.[12]

During the last year of CERP in Iraq, the Congress appropriated $100 million, expecting that Iraq's government would soon provide for its own people. A similar decrease in funding can be expected in Afghanistan as U.S. forces withdraw in 2014. The last U.S. forces left Iraq on December 17, 2011. With the U.S. Forces withdrawal complete, the Iraq CERP program ended, playing an important part in the Iraqi Freedom Campaign's successful conclusion.

<u>Afghanistan</u>

CERP did not become available in Afghanistan until fiscal year 2004, when the supplemental which became law in November 2003 made $40 million available. Three decades of warfare had destroyed many of the governmental functions and infrastructure that existed pre-Soviet invasion in 1979. Although CERP was a welcome tool that showed promise in resolving some of these outstanding challenges for the new government, the program was designed to fit Iraq, not Afghanistan. The rules that govern the program mirror many of the aspects of the CPA's request. Unlike in Iraq however, there were no large sums of Taliban or Al Qaida funding captured in Afghanistan. Afghanistan does not have vast wealth and is one of the poorest countries in the world. Commanders who wanted to do projects would have to rely on HCA funds, which typically took 18 months to get Department of Defense and Department of State approval.

There was a shorter process for HCA called "de minimus"[13] funding, which was for projects under $10,000. These projects didn't require interagency reviews but needed to go to CENTCOM for approval.[14] There was also a limited amount of these funds available and they were normally planned out in advance for a global engagement strategy. If a unit in theater saw an urgent requirement for the use of HCA funds they would have to go through many layers of approval to receive only $10,000. This showed a shortfall in capabilities with no apparent funding mechanism available to address it.

Some units in Afghanistan used the "de minimus" approach to use assets to help the local population when HCA funding was not available. Commonly this would be the use of life saving equipment or supplies to stabilize a patient until help arrived.

When it came to funding projects much like CERP, the "de minimus" concept could be used for small amounts of Operation and Maintenance Funds or equipment or supplies, but the scope would be much narrower than CERP would allow and the dollar amounts would be small. When I was working in United States Army Special Operations Command, we developed a process to get approval of "de minimus" funding to help units in Afghanistan in 2003. This policy allowed small amounts of Operations and Maintenance Funds to be used in limited circumstances as long as it was tied to the mission and had the necessary legal review. The approval of CERP authority in November 2003 solved our dilemma.

Current Situation

The current situation in Afghanistan has changed from the earlier period when CERP funding was an afterthought for the theater. Fiscal year 2012 saw $400 million in CERP funding appropriated for the theater. Since the program's inception in 2004, Afghanistan has received over $3.5 billion. During the height of the surge in Afghanistan, close to one billion dollars of CERP was allocated, which represents about five percent of the gross domestic product of Afghanistan.[15]However, funding that is allocated is not the same thing as funding that is actually spent. Of the $3.44 billion allocated, just a little over $2 billion actually found its way on contract. Towards the end of fiscal year 2012, only $137 million would be used of the $400 million appropriated.[16] This is not a new trend but one that has persisted since the program's start. Why so much money was not utilized requires an analysis of how the program is currently managed.

CERP Rules

Money as a Weapon System Afghanistan (MAAWS-A) USFOR-A Pub 1-06 (CERP) SOP dated March 2012 is the comprehensive guide to the CERP program as it currently exists in Afghanistan. The manual opens with an introduction letter about the program from Ambassador Ryan Crocker and General John Allen about what they expect CERP to accomplish. The key areas they want CERP managers to focus on are: understanding the economic environment; supporting targeted sector development; promoting job growth; understanding the challenge of sustainment; and maintaining the momentum and seeking alliances.[17] These themes for the CERP program provide commanders the ability to shape their environment under 19 different category areas. These categories are: agriculture, battle damage repair, civic cleanup activities, condolence payments, detainee payments, economic improvements, education, electricity, food production / distribution, health care, urgent humanitarian or reconstruction projects, protective measures, repair of civic and cultural facilities, governance, guards for critical infrastructure, telecommunications, transportation, and water and sanitation projects.[18] These broad and numerous categories give commanders a lot of flexibility within their AO's to affect their COIN strategy using CERP funds.

The lowest level commander in CERP management is the battalion commander, who is a lieutenant colonel or service equivalent. This individual is also the commander who has responsibility for the battle space. Other commanders who work in the battle space may request CERP but they must coordinate with the battle space owner prior to project execution. The table below shows approval thresholds for CERP projects:

Table 1
CERP Approval Threshold Matrix[19]

Item	Limit	Approval Authority	Legal Review
Project Approval	$5M >	Dep Sec Def	yes
Project Approval	$1M-$5M	USCENTCOM CDR	yes
Project Approval	up to $1M	USFOR-A CDR	yes
Project Approval	up to $500K	O-6 CDRs	yes
Project Approval	up to $100K	O-5 CDRs	yes

The commander approves projects within his or her approval authority and forwards actions that require higher approval up the chain of command for endorsement or approval.   Commanders appoint a CERP program manager to run the program and recommend projects for their AO. The CERP program manager recommends projects based on his plan and resourcing constraints in terms of time and money. A recommended prioritization list is developed based on the most urgent needs in the AO and the desired effects to be achieved. These are presented to the commander for approval.   Projects can be of any dollar amount not to exceed $20 million. Large projects from $5 million and above require Congressional notification. This is a recent change that was enacted into law in 2012 as Congress has tightened the rules and provided more oversight of the program. CERP funds may only be used by U.S. government personnel, not our allies. This is an important consideration if a unit is leaving an area and being replaced by allied forces, because someone in the U.S. military will have to monitor the project until completion.

Getting project buy-in in writing from the local government, the community, and the national government is critical and is required for projects over $200k to include assigning a project engineer from the Afghan government. A sustainment memorandum of agreement is signed between the Government of Afghanistan representative and the CERP project manager on projects that require operating or sustainment costs after the initial purchase.[20] This agreement is not binding on the Afghan government, but is intended to document expectations that they will maintain the project and not the United States. All construction projects over $200 thousand require a sustainment memorandum of agreement. With the planned withdrawal of U.S. Forces in 2014, it makes sense to have all CERP managers whose projects have future sustainment costs complete this memorandum with their Afghanistan counterparts.

Projects that are $500 thousand or more are reviewed by a CERP Working Group (CWG). The CWG is briefed either in person or via VTC / phone on the project details. Typical members for the board will be the civil affairs officer, resource manager, legal representative, engineer, contracting representative, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and other attendees as needed. These boards provide a mechanism to implement changes to the CERP program to achieve greater COIN effect.[21]

<div align="center">United States Assistance to Afghanistan</div>

CERP is one of many financial tools available to the U.S. government to support development in Afghanistan. Since 2001, foreign aid is one of three pillars of U.S. national security strategy, with global development being the primary objective of U.S. foreign aid. The 2002 National Security Strategy prioritized development as being as important as diplomacy and defense.[22] Since fiscal year 2002, the U.S. has

appropriated over $89 billion for Afghanistan, including $51 billion for relief and reconstruction efforts.[23] CERP outlays are only a small portion, approximately $3.44 billion through the same period and only account for 4% of the total appropriated. The Department of Defense accounts for 64% of funding with a majority of that funding, $49.63 billion, going to the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund.

State Department / United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

USAID is responsible for administering the Economic Support Fund (ESF) in Afghanistan. The total received to date is $14.95 billion in appropriations. The ESF focuses on building the capacity of Afghan institutions and promoting economic development in order to create employment and weaken support for the insurgency.[24]

Meanwhile, in preparation for transition to the Afghan government and military, the U.S. government is increasing the number of State Department and USAID personnel in Afghanistan. During the military surge, there was also a surge in civilian capabilities for the Department of State. The surge will bring State Department and USAID numbers up from 531 civilians to 1,450 by summer 2014 as U.S. troops depart the area.[25] These agents work with military personnel to give them greater expertise when dealing with civilian institutions of the Government of Afghanistan. Their success should lead to U.S. forces being able to hand over the security and governance to Afghan officials.

Since 2009's surge operations, approximately 80% of all projects funded by USAID are going into South and East Afghanistan. These stability projects are short term in nature versus long term development projects which USAID would prefer.[26] Short term projects are projects that can be implemented quickly to have immediate effects seen on the ground, such as repairing a facility or road. Some examples of a

long term development project that USAID is working on are the 18.5 megawatt turbine addition for the Kajaki hydropower plant in Helmand province. This project will supply the electricity requirement for Kandahar, and establishing a national power grid connection to Kandahar, the Kajaki Dam, and the national power grid. These projects are expected to be completed by 2016. To fill the gap in electricity in Kandahar, CERP projects were established to buy two more diesel generators for the city. These two generators produce 20 megawatts of power for the city. They account for 60% of the city's electric supply and provide the only reliable 24 hour power. This has allowed new industries to flourish, creating jobs that offer laborers opportunities other than employment with the Taliban[27]. This short term CERP effort linked with a long term ESF plan is an example of what could be accomplished to stabilize the region when our efforts are synchronized.

USAID has an important role in working with the Afghanistan government to determine priorities for international aid. It also works with the international community, both state actors and nongovernmental organizations to coordinate efforts. It works with the country team in the American Embassy to ensure unity of effort. It makes better sense for USAID to focus on long term development projects and coordinate their activities with the CERP managers to provide the short term effects. This would better utilize USAID's expertise and funding and provide unity of effort to our country strategy.

The U.S. Embassy has developed an Afghanistan and Pakistan Regional Stabilization Strategy to protect U.S. interests and bring stability to the region. This strategy focuses on six functional objectives:

- Rebuilding Afghanistan Agriculture Sector

- Strengthening Afghan Governance

- Enhancing Afghan Rule of Law

- Supporting Afghan led Reintegration

- Combating the Afghan Narcotics Trade

- Building an Economic Foundation for Afghanistan's Future

To achieve a whole of government approach, which includes both military and civilian personnel, the Embassy has worked to create Fusion Cells at all levels. The fielding of these teams could increase the effectiveness of CERP by providing the civilian expertise that was lacking earlier in the process. These cells are at the regional command level (Regional Integrated Team), the brigade level (Sub-Regional Integrated Team), the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) level (Provincial Integrated Team), and at the district level (District Support Team).[28] These teams could augment the existing CERP CWGs and CRBs and place that civilian expert in the project approval process, increasing the effectiveness of CERP projects in terms of our national goals and Afghanistan's national goals.

Afghanistan's Development Strategy

The Afghan Development Strategy has three pillars, eight sectors, and five crosscutting themes. Pillar one is security. Pillar two is governance, rule of law, and human rights. Pillar three is Economic and Social Development. These pillars have eight sectors which are:

- Security (Pillar 1)

- Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights (Pillar 2)

- Infrastructure and Natural Resources (Pillar 3)

- Education (Pillar 3)

- Health (Pillar 3)

- Agriculture and Rural Development (Pillar 3)

- Social Protection (Pillar 3)

- Economic Governance and Private Sector Development (Pillar 3)

These sectors have five themes that the country is trying to achieve. These are gender equality, counter narcotics, regional cooperation, anti-corruption, and environment. When compared to the State Department's goals they are very consistent with one another. We need to be cognizant of what the Afghan's hope to achieve. This will facilitate buy-in and transfer of programs to the GOA.

CERP for Effects

The functional objectives that provide appropriate metrics for assessing the effects we seek to achieve in Afghanistan, include rebuilding Afghanistan's agriculture, strengthening Afghan governance, enhancing Afghan rule of law, supporting Afghan-led reintegration, combating the Afghan narcotics trade, and building the economic foundation. The fusion cells also provide a tool to coordinate our activities within the CERP arena. CERP projects should be gauged on how well they achieved their COIN effect (short term) and how well they helped us realize these six objectives (long term). A member of Afghan Integrity Watch provided the following comments concerning U.S. aid efforts in Afghanistan: "In Vietnam, they were measuring success of operations in the numbers that are killed. In Afghanistan, it is how many schools you are building and how much you spent. This is better, but as wrong. What you need to measure is what is the impact of what you've done?"[29]

CERP project effects should be analyzed over a broader time horizon, including their COIN effect as well as the second and third order effects.   Projects that may have a short term stabilizing effect may actually have a long term negative effect for our forces or the government of Afghanistan. For example we can build a school but where are the teachers going to come from? Who is going to pay their salary? Who will be responsible for maintaining the building and supplying the supplies to educate the children? The answers to these questions are important.   The Afghan government has to have the ability to manage these tasks. The schools, if abandoned, will become a symbol of the government's inability to provide necessary support to its population. It will also discredit the U.S. effort. Sustainment of projects is now becoming a greater focus area as the U.S. forces transitions with the Afghan security forces.   CERP managers will have to think about sustainability over the life cycle of the project as well as the detrimental effects of failed projects to the credibility of the United States and our Afghanistan partners.

COIN Strategy and CERP

Military efforts are necessary and important to counterinsurgency efforts, but they are only effective when integrated into a comprehensive strategy employing all instruments of national power.[30] To have an effective COIN strategy, a leader needs to have an understanding of the relationship of all participants, both military and civilian. COIN leaders need to be able to orchestrate their efforts to achieve unity of effort. The current CERP approval process utilizing the CWG and CRB provides an opportunity to coordinate with outside agencies and host nation government officials. The Fusion Cells located within the Regional Command Structure have to be included in those

meetings so that there is a seamless integration of all capabilities available to the COIN commander.

The COIN strategy focus is on providing for the needs of the populace. It recommends focusing on five areas of concentration:[31]

- Security
- Economic Needs
- Essential Services
- Sustainment of the social and cultural Institutions
- Quality of Life

The military can provide the initial security, but the other four elements are places where CERP can have an impact. CERP may be the only means available to the commander to affect these areas during initial operations. While it is preferred for civilians especially local authorities to handle these functions, this is probably not viable during the security phase of the operation. During project planning CERP managers and commanders should invite both formal and informal local leaders to get buy-in from the populace and to help build legitimacy for the Host Nation. The lack of civilian counterparts makes it more important for CERP managers to be aware of the priorities that the country team has established.

The CERP manager needs to take special care in picking projects that meet the national goals and the host nation's priorities. This will facilitate the transition between the military and civilian agency. The handoff of responsibilities will be easier if the buy-in is up front. The best way to facilitate buy-in is to have the Afghans pick the projects and determine priorities, preferably at the local level. These meetings should be open

to the public to facilitate transparency of the process and help prevent corruption. The more the local population understands the process and sees how it works, the more confident in the process they will become. If interagency expertise is available, commanders and CERP managers need to integrate it into the decision making process early.

Limited Focus Areas

Although the original CERP appropriation was made for the Iraq campaign, it needs to be tailored for Afghanistan to focus on Afghan requirements. One method could be to take the five critical needs of the population that are expressed in our COIN doctrine and prioritize the CERP categories to focus only on those critical requirements within the AO. These projects should be small in size and scope and should complement, not replicate the actions of other government organizations or non-governmental organizations. For example, regarding the Kandahar electric problem discussed earlier, the delay in establishing the additional turbine is due to security concerns in getting the necessary equipment to the site. With the surge in Helmand, the security has improved but now forces are leaving prior to the work being completed. CERP could assist by providing security for the road until Afghan government forces arrive, similar to the Sons of Iraq model. The same model could be used for securing the transmission lines as they are being repaired. This approach works the security angle of COIN by taking personnel away from the insurgency. It also works the economic angle by providing power, which in turn provides manufacturing jobs and essential services for the populace.

Large development projects, while important, should be left to the State Department and the Government of Afghanistan. Limiting and focusing the scope of

CERP projects assists with unity of effort and supports the country team's goals by making projects more complementary and less redundant. The military draw down in theater will make the ability to manage projects harder as fewer teams will be available to oversee projects. Projects that can be completed in a short period of time and can be sustained by the local populace are critical for COIN effect. Small projects can be completed quickly, making our transition easier with fewer outstanding actions to be passed to follow-on units. In some instances there will be no follow-on units as troop levels decrease. Projects need to be completed and transitioned to local authorities in those cases.

Training

CERP managers do not always possess the necessary skills to choose projects that will have COIN effects that are also positive to the local, district, provincial and national Government of Afghanistan in both the short and long term. Current training regimes are focused on managing at the programmatic level. Emphasis is placed primarily on tracking projects in the Combined Information Data Network Exchange (CIDNE) and the financial systems. CIDNE is a project management system that is used to nominate projects and track them until completion. Inputs in the system are completed by CERP managers at all levels. The financial systems are managed in theater by the resource management office. Audits by the Inspector General of the United States Department of Defense have focused on disconnects between the CIDNE systems and the financial systems. The latest audit continues to find problems with tracking projects both programmatically and financially.[32] To address those problems the Financial Management School has developed two distance learning courses--- one of 16 hours on the CERP program and a follow-on course of 40 hours for functional

knowledge based on the individual's role in the CERP process.[33] Nevertheless, we need more training on how to achieve effects with the program. The training regime is reactive to audit findings but doesn't train users on how to select projects. Focus of training for CERP program managers needs to be on determining what is causing instability in an area and what effects are needed to address them. CERP managers need to understand mission command and see their projects as they relate to the overarching goals of the country team and our Afghan partners.

To do this well, we need to rethink the skill sets of our officer and noncommissioned officer corps. The U.S military should encourage our personnel to take courses in local universities on economics, agriculture, contracting, and project management to name a few examples. The Army's patch chart provides a window in which mobile teams can train units on country specific aspects that would provide CERP managers insight on how to achieve the desired effects. Current trends in the Middle East (with the Arab Spring) and in Africa show we have to prepare our soldiers better for the complexities they will face during deployment. Training and Doctrine Command should consider developing courses to educate non-civil affairs personnel on these principles. These courses could be incorporated into the current professional development programs or as stand-alone courses to build a deeper bench.

Needed Authorities

Continued CERP authority is necessary to fulfill global expectations that the United States will intervene in other failed states in the future, such as Syria. The current CERP authority is only available for Afghanistan and Iraq. Congress allowed the Iraq authority to cease with the end of that mission; the same can be expected in Afghanistan in 2014 if the mission ends as planned. This authority should be codified in

the U.S. Code to allow the use of operations and maintenance funds in extreme circumstances. Congress could control this authority in a number of ways, such as requiring the Secretary of Defense to request that Congress release the authority. By having this authority in the U.S. Code, comptrollers and contracting officers will be better prepared to execute these programs on short notice and proper planning and training considerations will take place prior to combat or stability operations.

Measuring Effects

The current CIDNE system tracks programs from start to finish but does not report whether or not the desired effects were achieved. As the mission in Afghanistan winds down, a review of projects should be done where practical and relevant to determine if projects achieved their long term desired effects.   We need to reflect so that we don't repeat the same mistakes in the future. The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) may be positioned to provide critical and unbiased insight into the program. This needs to be done while we still have the troops to provide security for the assessment teams.   The Center for Army Lessons Learned needs to interview people involved in CERP to capture what happened so that information is available to the next generation of Army leaders. The theater needs a database of lessons learned and best practices by category that can be searched by CERP managers when planning projects. This system should also incorporate a tool for asking questions or requesting technical assistance on projects. This could be a way to pool limited subject matter expertise in theater or around the world.

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Conclusion

CERP was created because there was an urgent need to do HCA in theater.

Military leaders need to learn from our experiences with CERP and train our future

leaders so they can be effective in a domain that should be dominated by civilian

capability.   The military in the past did not expect to have to do these civilian

requirements but must be prepared to do so in the future when warranted. CERP gave

us an ability to affect the populace, especially when there was no civilian counterpart to

assist. Given security realities in failed states, the military will have a larger role. We

need to build relationships prior to deploying with USAID personnel to facilitate our

understanding of their capabilities. To accomplish this in the future, USAID should train

with us so we can build that unity of effort that is critical in a COIN strategy. Until such

time that a true unity of effort can be achieved and properly resourced, we need to

remain vigilant on all the aspects of national power to achieve our ends. CERP was

one of the effective tools to achieving those ends in Iraq and has great potential for

achieving victory in Afghanistan.

Endnotes

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[12] Mark Wilbanks and Efraim Karsh, *How the "Sons of Iraq" Stabalized Iraq,* Middle East Quarterly Fall 2010 (vol 17, Issue 4) pg 57-70.

[13] The term "de minimus" is a legal term that in Latin means: "of minimum importance" or "trifling." Essentially it refers to something or a difference that is so little, small, minuscule, or tiny that the law does not refer to it and will not consider it. In a million dollar deal, a $10 mistake is de minimus. De minimus, http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com (accessed 2 December 2012).

[14] Mario V. Garcia Jr., *Achieving Security Cooperation Objectives Through the United States European Command Humanitarian and Civic Assistance Program*, DISAM Journal of Internation Security Assistance Management (Fall 2002/Winter 2003) pg 105-108.

[15] Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress,* April 2011, 136-137.

[16] G9 Briefing V Corps, V Corps G9 CERP / ARP Weekly Update 16 September 2012, Kabul Afghanistan, Slide 2.

[17] United States Forces Afghanistan, *Introductory Letter from Ambassador Ryan Crocker and General John Allen*, United States Forces Afghanistan Publication 1-06 Commander's Emergency Relief Program (CERP) SOP, March 2012.

[18] Ibid., 77.

[19] Ibid., 21.

[20] Each project has a project manager to manage the project to completion or to ensure a proper hand over to the new project manager.   A project manager can manage more than one

project as long as the project manager can monitor the progress of each to ensure completion. The more complex the project, the fewer projects an individual should manage. United States Forces Afghanistan Publication 1-06 Commander's Emergency Relief Program (CERP) SOP, March 2012.

[21] The CWG screens packets and sends approved packets to the CERP review board. The CRB is at the Regional Command level and higher and will review all packets before making a recommendation to the commander for approval. The key function of this group is to review projects and to make sure all the subject matter experts on the staff have seen the packet. They will evaluate the package based on the requirements and checklist that is available in the MAAWS'A CERP SOP. United States Forces Afghanistan Publication 1-06 Commander's Emergency Relief Program (CERP) SOP, March 2012.

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[32] Inspector General United States Department of Defense, *Management Improvements Needed in Commander's Emergency Response Program in Afghanistan*, November 21, 2011, i-ii.

[33] Mark W. Lee, The Commander's Emergency Response Program: Synergistic Results Through Training, *Sustainment* May- June 2010, 10-13.